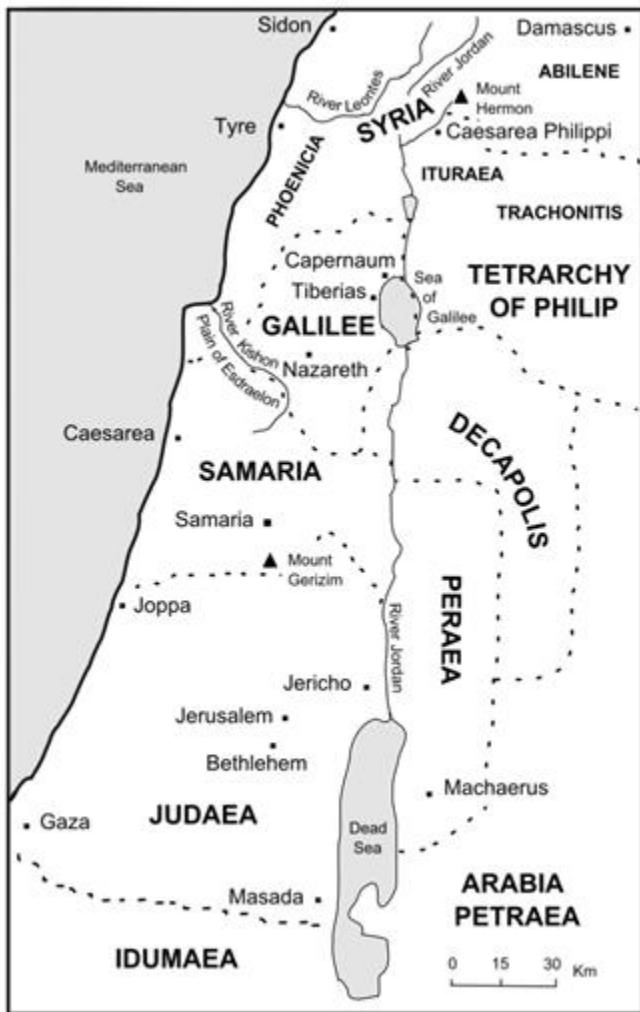


## HEARTBEATS- Staying Connected 10/8/2021

Dear Friends in Christ,

The waters of Israel provide a wonderful illustration for Christians. It is a lesson that almost seems too simple, but is so very important. And it is based on the flow of the Jordan River.

The Jordan River begins in northern Israel at two locations, Caesarea Philippi and at Tell Dan to the west. The two flowing waters join to form the Jordan River which then fills a small lake in the region of Ituraea. The river continues on into the Sea of Galilee. At the south end of Galilee, the Jordan continues on until it reaches the Dead Sea where it stops.



The Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea couldn't be anymore different from each other. The region around the Sea of Galilee is lush and green. The Sea of Galilee itself is full of fish and life. This is where the first of Jesus' disciples lived and worked as fishermen. The Dead Sea, on the other hand is, well, dead. It is surrounded by desert with little vegetation. There are no fish in the Dead Sea. It is, for all practical purposes, lifeless.

So, why are these two bodies of water so different? What do the waters of the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea teach us? Both are fed by the same water, the Jordan River. Both are in relatively similar climates. Yet one is alive and one is dead. The answer comes in recognizing that, though both bodies receive, in this case water from the Jordan, the difference is that the Sea of Galilee also gives. Water flows in from the north and out of the south. The Sea of Galilee both receives and gives. The Dead Sea on the other hand only receives. It does not give away the water that flows in. There the water stagnates and the Sea is lifeless.

The lesson for us is the value of both receiving and giving. We are fed and nurtured by that with which God blesses us. But we fully find life when we give some of what we have received to others. We actually flourish in the joy of sharing a portion of that over which God has made us stewards. True life comes when we are able to joyfully and graciously use what we have received to help and serve others—a fascinating lesson from the waters of the Holy Land.

In Christ's love,  
Pastor Jeffrey